

Exam Access Arrangements: Policy and Procedures

INTRODUCTION

At Truro and Penwith College, we are committed to providing an inclusive, supportive, and equitable learning environment. We believe all learners should be able to fully access and engage with their education, including assessment and examinations in line with the **Equality Act 2010**.

To support this aim, the College has a comprehensive graduated approach in place. This includes a broad Universal offer of support focussed on inclusive strategies that benefit all and a range of additional targeted or specialist learning support for some. These include teaching adaptations, calm spaces, assistive technology, study support tuition, Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs) etc. Our Learning Support Team and Specialist Assessors work with students, curriculum teams and their next of kin (NoK) to explore the most appropriate support.

Learners whose needs are evidenced within the classroom as having a substantial and long-term effect on their access to timed assessments may be invited to an EAA assessment. If the assessment and supporting evidence meet JCQ criteria, the College will apply to the relevant awarding bodies for suitable exam arrangements. All arrangements must be approved by the awarding body before they can be implemented.

Where EAAs are allocated, they are tailored to each learner's individual needs and their usual way of working in the classroom. They are designed to enable fair access without compromising the integrity of the exam or giving an unfair advantage.

1.1 Scope

To make appropriate additional assessment and examination arrangements for all Truro and Penwith College learners. EAA may include:

- Extra time
- Rest breaks
- Readers
- Scribe
- Word Processor (see Appendix 1)
- Smaller or separate rooms (determined strictly according to need within resources available)
- Modified papers
- Prompter
- Access to assistive technology/specialist software or equipment
- Bi-lingual dictionary

Access arrangements must reflect a learner's *normal way of working*, supported by robust evidence from classroom staff. All arrangements are subject to approval by

awarding bodies and must be applied for in line with JCQ deadlines, which are updated annually.

N.B 'Special consideration' is not an EAA as it refers to post-exam adjustments for temporary illness, injury, or other exceptional circumstances that may have affected a learner's performance during the assessment. Each case is assessed by the exams officer individually and must be supported by appropriate evidence.

2. Procedures

Identification

Early identification is essential to ensure that EAA applications meet JCQ deadlines and that learners receive timely support. Teachers and support staff are supported to identify known, emerging or changing need through a range of pedagogical and SEND training and receive termly EAA clinics from the assessment team.

Learners may be identified through:

- Admissions and enrolment processes
- Interviews and information shared via the Confidential Additional Learning Support Referral Form (CAMF) and subsequent documentation shared.
- Referrals from teachers, support staff, family members, other professionals or the learner themselves

Please note that although previously having EAA at school (e.g., extra time) is important and helps substantiate a 'history of need', ***it does not automatically carry over to college*** as we must also collect evidence of *current* need, how this affects a learner's performance at College and their Normal Way of Working. If necessary, learners may undergo additional assessment to determine eligibility for exam arrangements.

Students/Next of kin are strongly encouraged to contact the Learning Support Team before seeking private diagnostic testing so that we can advise of the evidence currently put forward by teaching staff and of the impact of this testing on the tests available for us to use. External reports and diagnostic testing (e.g., from educational psychologists) are considered advisory under JCQ regulations as final decisions are based on current classroom evidence and assessment results carried out by our qualified Specialist Assessors.

If no prior information exists, a referral may be made following a review period, where lecturers trial in-class adaptations. If substantial difficulties persist, evidence will be collected during the first year of study in order to form a comprehensive history of substantial difficulty. In these instances, learners may be referred for an initial screening (e.g., the EXACT test, neurodevelopmental profiling tool), followed by an in college diagnostic assessment if appropriate.

Where evidence of normal ways of working has been gathered retrospectively, this can be considered on a case-by-case basis

If the evidence gathered does not meet the JCQ criteria for exams access arrangements, students and NoK are notified and will continue with existing support in place.

Assessment

EAA assessments help determine the provision a student may need in examinations. For some learners (e.g., those with Education, Health and Care Plans), this may involve reviewing existing documentation. Others may take standardised assessments in areas like reading, writing, and processing.

Awarding bodies require proof that EAAs are part of a student's usual classroom practice. To gather this:

- Lecturers and support staff complete 'Normal Way of Working (*NWoW*) forms'
- Students are expected to regularly use any approved arrangements in lessons and assessments
- If not used, EAA provision may be reviewed

At the time of assessment, students confirm their agreement with these expectations or may choose to decline the arrangements. Students reserve the right to decline arrangements.

Normal Way of Working Forms (NWoWs) will be required from all relevant lecturing & support staff to demonstrate 'normal way of working'. The *NWoW*, alongside students' work, provides the required evidence alongside any diagnostic assessment carried out by our Specialist Assessors. **It is a regulatory requirement that *NWoW* evidence must be in place before an EAA application can be made.**

Assessments are carried out by Level 7-qualified Specialist Assessors. Recommendations are made based on the results of testing as well as current classroom evidence and feedback from staff. The arrangements vary based on each student's needs, subject requirements, and what is considered a "reasonable adjustment."

Assessments are prioritised based on urgency e.g. exam dates, and the complexity of needs. Sufficient time is required to complete the process and apply to awarding bodies/JCQ before the stated deadline. This process takes a **minimum of six weeks (often longer)** so early evidenced referrals are required in order to avoid disadvantage and meet the deadlines..

Learners are offered one standard appointment. If a learner is unable to attend, they should notify the College and request to reschedule. Appointment notifications are sent in advance to the relevant college staff, NoK and student when booked and reminders are sent via Teams message/text/ on the day.

To reduce disruption to learning, assessments are scheduled with minimal impact on lessons.

Students with physical or medical needs

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Learners with medical or physical needs—including mental health—are asked to provide evidence from a medical specialist involved in their care. (Please note that GP letters can only support the arrangement of a small room, together with evidence of a learner's normal way of working) The evidence only needs to confirm the medical condition.

Once received at learningsupport@truro-penwith.ac.uk, the Learning Support team may follow up to clarify or confirm arrangements.

Students with exam anxiety

JCQ guidance requires that exam access arrangements be based on evidence of a *long-term* condition. As such, exam anxiety alone does not qualify for EAAs.

However, learners experiencing anxiety are encouraged to contact Student Services, who can offer personalised support, tools, and coping strategies for managing exam stress.

Word Processor

According to JCQ guidance, word processors may be appropriate for learners who have:

- Regularly used a laptop/computer in lessons/timed assessments
- Significant difficulty with handwriting (legibility or speed)
- A medical or physical condition
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational difficulties when writing
- Difficulty producing written work by hand

Using a laptop at home, or a preference for typing, does not meet the criteria.

25% Extra Time

Additional samples of centre-based evidence **MUST** now accompany the evidence for 25% extra time. A sample of internal test or mock exam paper across relevant subjects needs to demonstrate how a student uses the 25% extra time. Staff feedback from observations explaining why 25% extra time is needed and how it is used in practice is now also required.

Deadlines

We will consider referrals for Learning Support at any time; where EAA is being considered as part of this JCQ and awarding bodies deadlines apply as follows:

*Evidence gathering and assessment process (which takes a minimum of 6 weeks) **must be completed in full and submitted to JCQ no later than:***

- **21st November** for the January exams
- **21st March** for Summer exams

Where the process is ongoing past these dates, any EAA allocated will be allocated to the following exam series. Students and NoK will be advised in their confirmation letter the exam series their EAA will begin to be in place.

Note: EAA cannot be granted for new learners sitting November GCSE resits (due to time constraints), but if approved by 21st March, arrangements will be in place for the summer series.

Approved EAA

Confirmed arrangements are recorded in the student's Additional Learning Support (ALS) profile and shared with the student and their Next of Kin via email.

Reviews

Online EAA applications are valid for 26 months. Some arrangements (e.g., 50% extra time or Oral Language Modifiers) are reviewed annually. Classroom staff may be asked to provide updated evidence if needed.

Students should inform Learning Support if they are no longer using their access arrangement, or if there has been a change in their needs.

Updated confirmation will be sent via email if adjustments are revised.

Appeals

Decisions made by Specialist Assessors are final and are in line with JCQ guidelines; therefore, are not subject to appeal. For other concerns, students/NOK are referred to the College's formal **Complaints Procedure**.

Appendix 1

- Head of Centre – Appoints the Examinations Officer and Examinations Assessment Advisor.
- Director of Operations and support – Oversees Learning Support and Examinations teams.
- DTL Learning Support and Inclusive Practice – Ensures effective implementation of reasonable adjustments.

- Examinations Officer/Deputy Exams Officers – Manage the administration of all exams.
- Specialist Assessors – Qualified professionals responsible for assessing learners and recommending appropriate access arrangements.
- Student Services Mental Health Advisor – Supports learners with exam-related wellbeing and coping strategies.
- Principal and Senior Management Team – Hold overall responsibility for this policy